

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
----- 103465

R 301116Z JAN 76  
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9644  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 CAIRO 1229

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, JO, EG, XF  
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN-JORDANIAN RELATIONS

### 1. SUMMARY

CURRENT STRAINED EGYPTIAN EGYPTIAN-JORDANIAN RELATIONS  
RESULT PARTYLY FROM HUSSEIN'S PUBLIC CRITICISM  
OF SINAI II AND PARTLY FROM SADAT'S GROWING  
SENSE OF FRUSTRATION AT WEAKENING OF GOE POLITICAL  
INFLUENCE IN ARAB WORLD IN WAKE OF SINAI II.  
NOT ONLY FAHMY, BUT SADAT AS WELL BELIVE HUSSEIN  
HAS AN INFLATED IDEA OF HIS IMPORTANCE AND ACCUSE  
HIM OF BEING A QUOTE LIAR UNQUOTE AND OPPORTUNIST.  
THEY BELIEVE HE RESENTS EFFECT OF STRENGTHENED  
US-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS ON HIS PAST ABILITY TO ACT  
AS PRINCIPAL ARAB CHANNEL TO USG. SCOFFING AT  
SUGGESTION HE MIGHT SERVE AS BRIDGE BETWEEN EGYPT  
AND SYRIA, THEY RESENT HIS COZYING UP TO SYRIANS  
AND ARE OUT TO TEACH HIM A LESSON. CONTRADICTION  
MARKS EGYPTIAN POLICY TOWARDS JORDAN: THEY WOULD  
LIKE TO SPLIT JORDANIAN-SYRIAN AXIS, YET  
THEIR ACTIONS DRIVE HUSSEIN MORE INTO SYRIAN ARMS.  
ASSIGNMENT OF UNWANTED OSMAN NURI AS AMBASSADOR

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TO JORDAN, WHICH SADAT STILL INSISTS UPON, HAS

BECOME SYMBOL OF CONTROVERSY. WHILE WE SHOULD REMIND EGYPTIANS, AS APPROPRIATE, THAT HUSSEIN REPRESENTS A QUOTE MODERATE UNQUOTE ARAB FORCE, WE WOULD BE WELL ADVISED NOT TO SEEK TO INTERVENE WHEN TWO SUCH ARAB LEADERS ARE VENTING THEIR FRATERNAL FEELINGS TOWARDS EACH OTHER. SAUDIS, IF THEY WISH, ARE IN BETTER POSITION TO DO SO. SADAT BADLY WANTS PEACE PROCESS TO CONTINUE AND, WITH CONTINUED SYRIAN REFUSAL TO PARTICIPATE, HE WOULD LIKE JORDAN AS PARTNER FOR COSMETIC PURPOSES. HIS THREAT TO GO IT ALONE IS PRESSURE TACTIC INTENDED WARN SYRIANS AND JORDANIANS THAT THEY MUST ADOPT MORE FORTHCOMING POSITION ON GENEVA OR PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE CONVENING IN '76. AS WEAKER OF THE TWO, HUSSEIN WILL ALSO BE WELL ADVISED TO QUOTE LIE LOW UNQUOTE FOR A TIME AND AVOID PUBLIC COMMENT ON SINAI II AND ALSO GO SLOWLY IN DEALING WITH SYRIANS. HIS PUBLIC POSTURE WILL IN LARGE MEASURE DETERMINE HOW LONG RELATIONS REMAIN ROILED. END SUMMARY.

2. IN VIEW AMBASSADOR PICKERING'S REQUEST FOR CAIRO COMMENT ON RECENT AMMAN MESSAGES ABOUT CURRENT STRAINED STATE OF EGYPTIAN-JORDANIAN RELATIONS, MY OBSERVATIONS ARE SET FORTH BELOW:

3. JUSTIFIABLY OR NOT, SADAT IS INCENSED ABOUT HUSSEIN. HIS SHARP LETTER AND STRONG COMMENTS TO ABDUL MUNIM RIFAI AND TALHOUNI ARE MANIFESTATIONS OF THISPIQUE. SADAT'S CURRENT ATTITUDE -- NERVOUSNESS, AS JORDANIANS CALL IT -- IS ROOTED IN A GROWING SENSE OF FRUSTRATION ARISING FROM (A) RELUCTANT AND UNWILLING RECOGNITION THAT SINAI II, WHILE GIVING HIM SOME IMPORTANT TERRITORIAL RETURNS, HAS HAMSTRUNG GOE'S MUCH-VAUTED POLITICAL ABILITY TO INFLUENCE ARAB WORLD, AS EVIDENCED BY GOE IMPOTENCE IN LEBANESE SITUATION; (B) ANNOYANCE THAT ASAD HAS BEEN ABLE TO CAPITALIZE ON SITUATION; (C) WORRY THAT PEACE PROCESS WILL REMAIN STYMIED THROUGH '76; (D) HUSSEIN'S FLIRTATION WITH ASAD, AND (E) HUSSEIN'S PUBLIC CRITICISM OF SINAI II.

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ONE WOULD LIKE TO BELIEVE THAT CONCERN OVER THE DETERIORATING EGYPTIAN ECONOMIC SITUATION IS ANOTHER FACTOR, BUT THIS IS AT MOST ONLY MARGINALLY SO. SADAT IS ESSENTIALLY A POLITICAL BEING, WHOSE WHOLE WAKING DAY IS SPENT ON POLITICAL MATTES.

4. AS DEPT AWARE, SADAT TOLD US EARLIER THAT HE HAD REFUSED TO RECEIVE A SPECIAL JORDANIAN

ENVOY WHOM HUSSEIN WISHED TO SEND. HE ULTIMATELY RECEIVED ABDEL MUNIM RIFAI AND TALHOUNI AS ONE OF SEVERAL ARAB DELEGATIONS ATTENDING ARAB INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETING IN CAIRO. THUS, IT WAS NO SPECIAL FAVOR, BUT A PROTRACTED PROTOCOL OCCASION WHICH SADAT USED TO EXCORIATE JORDANIANS. IT IS A MARK OF HIS CURRENT BITTERNESS TOWARD HUSSEIN THAT HE SHOULD HAVE DELIVERED HIS SHARP LECTURE TO ABDUL MUNIM RIFAI. SADAT LIKES ABDEL MUNIM AND HAS IN PAST OFTEN ACCORDED HIM BETTER TREATMENT THAN LATTER RECEIVED FROM HIS OWN LIEGE LORD.

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5. JORDANIANS ERR IN ATTEMPTING TO PLACE MOST OF BLAME FOR BAD RELATIONS ON FAHMY. FAHMY DESPISES ZAID RIFAI, A FEELING DOUBTLESS HEARTILY RECIPROCATED. BUT HUSSEIN'S ACTIONS HAVE ALSO BROUGHT SADAT INTO ANIT-JORDANIAN CAMP. BOTH SADAT AND FAHMY VIEW HUSSEIN AS A MINOR FIGURE IN ME. THEY BELIEVE HE HAS BECOME TOO BIG FOR HIS BRITCHES AND ACCUSE HIM OF BEING A QUOTE LIAR UNQUOTE AND OPPORTUNIST. THEY ARE CONVINCED, INCIDENTLLY, THAT HUSSEIN'S RECENT ACTIVITIES RESULT FROM THE KING'S DISPLEASURE OVER STRENGTHENED US-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS. IN THE PAST, HUSSEIN COULD POSE AS

THE ONLY ARAB LEADER (APART FROM LATE KING FAISAL) WITH A DIRECT DIALOGUE WITH USG, BUT THIS PRIVILEGED POSITION FOUNDERED ON THE ROCKS OF THE US-EGYPTIAN RAPPROACHMENT. EGYPTIANS SCOFF AT SUGGESTION HUSSEIN MIGHT SERVE AS BRIDGE BETWEEN SYRIANS AND THEM. THEY BELIEVE HUSSEIN IS BEING DUPED BY ASAD AND, AS A RESULT OF HIS COZYING UP TO SYRIANS, THEY ARE OUT TO TEACH HIM A LESSON.

6. CONTRADICTION IS HALLMARK OF PRESENT EGYPTIAN POLICY TOWARD JORDAN. ON ONE HAND, EGYPTIANS WANT  
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US TO URGE HUSSEIN TO WEAKEN HIS TIES WITH SYRIA, ON THE OTHER, THEY SEEK TO PUT HIM IN HIS PLACE BY THE THREAT OF EXPOSURE AND THEREBY DRIVE HIM MORE INTO SYRIAN ARMS. IN DRUG LIKE FASHION, EGYPTIANS ARE ADDICTED TO THE EFFICACY OF QUOTE EXPOSURE UNQUOTE TACTICS, OVERLOOKING FACT THAT THEIR INDULGENCE THEREIN USUALLY LEADS TO STERILE EXCHANGES.

7. ISSUE OF AMBASSADOR OSMAN NURI HAS BECOME SYMBOL OF WHO BACKS DOWN. FROM ALL ACCOUNTS -- INCLUDING SAUDI, WHERE HE SERVED PAST YEAR -- NURI IS SOMETHING OF BUMBLER. WITHREGRETTABLE BUT TYPICAL EGYPTIAN INSENSITIVITY, SADAT AND FAHMY REMAIN DETERMINED TO SEND HIM DESPITE HUSSEIN'S OBJECTIONS. FAHMY INSISTS NURI WAS NEVER PNG'D, BUT LEFT WHEN EGYPTIAN-JORDANIAN RELATIONS WERE BROKEN. NURI IS STILL IN EGYPT, BUT EGYPTIANS SAY THEY WILL HOLD OUT UNTIL HUSSEIN AGREES. JUDGING FROM AMMAN'S REPORTS, HUSSEIN WILL NOT DO SO. THUS, BOTH SIDES HAVE PAINTED THEMSELVES INTO CORNERS. NEITHER IS LIKELY TO GIVE WAY SOON LEST HE LOSE FACE.

8. IN MY JUDGMENT, IT WOULD BE MISTAKE FOR USG TO SEEK TO INTERVENE WHEN TWO SUCH ARAB LEADERS ARE VENTING THEIR FRATERNAL FEELINGS TOWARD EACH OTHER. WE WILL BE SOLE LOSER BY DOING SO. SHOULD WE APPEAR TO BE AN ADVOCATE OF HUSSEIN, THIS WILL BE RESENTED HERE. I ASSUME THE OPPOSITE IS EQUALLY TRUE IN AMMAN. WE CAN, OF COURSE, REMIND EGYTIAN THAT HUSSEIN, TOO, REPRESENTS A QUOTE MODERATE UNQUOTE ARAB FORCE AND SHOULD DO SO AS APPROPRIATE. SAUDIS MAY BE ABLE TO HELP, IF THEY WISH. UNLESS ARAB POLITENESS GETS THE BETTER OF THEM, THEY CAN CERTAINLY MAKE CLEAR TO SADAT WHAT A DISASTER NURI WAS AS AMBASSADOR TO SAUDI ARABIA -- FOR WHATEVER GOOD THIS MAY DO.

9. I VIEW SADAT'S STATEMENTS TO ABDUL MUNIM  
RIFAI ABOUT ASAD AND ABOUT GOING IT ALONE IN PEACE  
PROCESS, IF NECESSARY, AS INTENDED FOR BOTH SYRIANS  
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AND JORDANIANS. EGYPTIANS ASSUME THAT ANYTHING THEY  
TELL JORDANIANS WILL BE PASSED TO SYRIANS, USUALLY  
IN DISTORTED FORM INTENDED TO SERVE JORDANIAN INTERESTS.  
RE SADAT'S STATEMENT ABOUT ASAD, HUSSEIN  
HAS BEEN PUT ON NOTICE THAT THERE IS NO ROOM FOR  
COMPROMISE AND JORDANIAN INVOLVEMENT WITH SYRIANS  
IS AT THEIR OWN PERIL. SADAT BELIEVES HUSSEIN  
MUST MAKE CHOICE IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.  
JORDANIANS CAN ONLY MAINTAIN POLITICAL FRONT WITH  
SYRIA AT COST OF BAD RELATIONS WITH EGYPT. SADAT  
IS AWARE OF RISKS OF PROCEEDING ALONE WITH PEACE  
PROCESS AND, IF SYRIA PERSISTS IN REFUSING TO  
PARTICIPATE, WOULD AT LEAST LIKE TO HAVE JORDAN  
FOR COSMETIC PURPOSES. I SUSPECT HIS THREAT TO  
GO IT ALONE IS AT LEAST PARTLY INTENDED TO PRESSURE  
ASAD (AND HUSSEIN) TO ADOPT A MORE FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE TOWARDS  
A RECONVENED GENEVA OR PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE  
THIS YEAR, WHICH GOES SO BADLY WANTS. WHETHER IT WORKS OR NOT  
IS, OF COURSE, ANOTHER MATTER.

10. HOWEVER MUCH HUSSEIN BELIEVES HE WATERED DOWN  
THE ORIGINAL SYRIAN CONDEMNATION ON SINAI II,  
THE KING'S GREAT MISTAKE WAS JOINING ASAD IN  
ANY PUBLIC ATTACK ON IT. AS THE INTER-ARAB  
POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES FOR GOES OF SINAI II BECOME  
APPARENT, SADAT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY SENSITIVE  
TO ATTACKS ON HIM FOR CONCLUDING IT. SINCE  
HUSSEIN IS THE WEAKER OF THE TWO, THE KING WILL  
BE WELL-ADVISED TO QUOTE LIE LOW UNQUOTE FOR A TIME  
AND (A) AVOID PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS ON THE SUBJECT  
AND (B) GO SLOWLY IN DEALING WITH SYRIANS. HIS  
ACTIONS ON BOTH OF THESE POINTS WILL IN LARGE  
MEASURE DETERMINE HOW SOON, IF AT ALL, A THAW AGAIN  
DEVELOPS IN EGYPTIAN-JORDANIAN RELATIONS.  
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## Message Attributes

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